

YAKIMA, WASH.

HERALD-REPUBLIC

FEB 9 1977

D - 34,847

S - 36,153

Our dictatorships

Occasionally — such as Monday after reading the New York Times News Service story on the Central Intelligence Agency's use of Laotian refugee funds to finance paramilitary operations — we get a distinct feeling that we Americans are kidding ourselves. We boast of our fine democratic processes — even while we suspect that we are the victims of a bureaucratic dictatorship.

Protected, perhaps justifiably, by claims of national security, the CIA seems answerable to nobody, including the President of the United States. No one person seems to know where all CIA funds come from, how they are spent, what ventures that cloak-and-dagger operation may be planning next — or especially, how to pull its claws.

Less mysterious, perhaps, but just as independent and often just as arrogant, are many other bureaus in our gigantic federal apparatus. There is an almost general agreement that there simply is too much government, but almost no agreement on how to reduce it.

Two recent comments by congressional figures of both parties are revealing:

Said Senate Democratic Leader

Mike Mansfield in a recent interview, "We are top-heavy in federal bureaus and agencies. We have been slap happy, piling agencies upon one another."

And Sen. Strom Thurmond, South Carolina Republican, said at a news conference, "The federal government has gotten so big and cumbersome that not any President, no matter who he is, can manage it."

The CIA's untouchable attitude is but a symbol, though undeniably a singularly offensive one, of an almost traditional bureaucratic reluctance to allow any other branch of government to control either growth or operations. That was especially evident when the late President Eisenhower attempted to whittle down the massive State Department. He gave it up as a bad job.

Someday, a President will join forces with strident voices in Congress to hammer the supposedly uncontrollable bureaucracies back into their original role of carrying out policies set by the executive and legislative branches. It can't happen too soon. Meanwhile, is there no one in the federal government who can haul in the CIA and set it straight on who is in charge?